

N.Y. WOMAN 'SPY' IS FREED BY REDS

CPYRGHT

Await Word

On U.S. Fliers

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Gabrielle Hammerstein, 39, New York opera singer flew back here last night after two years' imprisonment by East German Communists on espionage charges.

She was accompanied by her mother, Dr. Gertrude Rosenhain, of 35-40 82d st., Jackson Heights, Queens, who said her daughter, freed because of ill health, was incoherent on the plane and 'obviously affected by her ordeal in prison.'

Meanwhile in Berlin, U. S. military authorities awaited the "momentary" return of two Air Force officers held captive by the Soviets.

AWAIT WORD

Military officials said the two Air Force officers could be freed at any time today. They indicated the first word of their release might come from President Johnson's East-er vacation White House in Johnson City, Tex.

The airmen, Capt. David I. Holland, 35, of Holland, Minn., and Capt. Melvin Kessler, 30, of Philadelphia, were shot down over East Germany March 10 when their RB-66 bomber strayed across the border. A third crewman, injured in parachuting from the plane, was freed last week.

Miss Hammerstein, a striking redhead, had been in Berlin two years as a singer and freelance writer, when she was arrested in East Berlin in January, 1962.

CLEMENCY APPEAL

The following August she was tried in a secret court session on espionage charges the Communists never have detailed.

A U.S. spokesman said she

had served two years of a six-year sentence when she was released "on the basis of a clemency appeal submitted by her lawyer on behalf of her family."

Miss Hammerstein had told reporters she had good contacts in the Eastern zone, including Communist propagandist Gerhart Elsler who jumped bail in the U.S. to flee to East Germany.

At that time a U.S. Mission spokesman said Miss Hammerstein had "a long and complicated medical background."

The clemency presumably was granted by Walter Ulbricht, the bearded Communist leader of East Germany.

CONTACT MOTHER

The mother had been traveling in Europe when the East German State Dept. contacted her to say her daughter would be released.

Dr. Rosenhain said she met her daughter at the Heinrich Heine checkpoint on the Berlin border and took her to Frankfurt for the flight home.

In their brief border transaction, the mother said, there was no mention of the promised release of two Air Force fliers held captive in East Germany.

Miss Hammerstein, who attended Jackson Heights public schools, studied at New York University for a year before embarking on a singing career.

The Communists officially disclosed the charges, but Dr. Rosenhain said he rdaughter's captors used the word "espionage."

"That is the ridiculous word they used for things she didn't do," the mother added.